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RUEHBP/AMEMBASSY BAMAKO IMMEDIATE 0847  
RUEHNM/AMEMBASSY NIAMEY IMMEDIATE 1828  
RUEHMRE/AMCONSUL MARSEILLE IMMEDIATE 1707  
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ALGIERS 000106

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/29/2024  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KPAO](#) [MARR](#) [ASEC](#) [AG](#)  
SUBJECT: ABC NEWS STORY BREAKS IN ALGERIA

ALGIERS 00000106 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador David D.Pearce; reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S/NF) The ABC News story reporting alleged sexual misconduct by the Algiers chief of station first appeared in Algeria the morning of January 29 on the electronic news journal Tout Sur l'Algerie. The story aired late enough in the U.S. on January 28 that it did not appear in the January 29 Algerian print media, though we expect it to run later in the day on the Arab satellite networks and possibly on Algerian television, with subsequent appearance in the Algerian print media on Saturday, January 31.

¶2. (S/NF) Taking advantage of a previously scheduled meeting with Minister-Delegate of National Defense Abdelmalek Guenaizia, Ambassador raised the subject using Department guidance on the morning of January 29 with Guenaizia, and immediately following the meeting in a phone call with MFA Director-General for the Americas Fatiha Selmane. Selmane and Guenaizia, along with Major General Ahmed Senhadji, were all as yet unaware of the story and grateful the Ambassador was the first one to inform them. Guenaizia and Senhadji were satisfied to hear that U.S. authorities were looking into the matter, a sentiment echoed subsequently by Selmane, who commented that it appeared justice was taking its course.

¶3. (C) Ambassador made the following points, drawing on guidance provided by the Department, and which post will be using with Algerian officials:

- The individual who is the subject of these press reports has been returned to Washington.
- The U.S. takes very seriously any accusations of misconduct involving any U.S. personnel, and you could expect any allegations of criminal misconduct to be thoroughly investigated.
- Such investigations are sensitive and the details cannot be shared until they become public, so as not to compromise ongoing law enforcement efforts and be consistent with U.S. legal requirements.
- With respect to this particular individual, I can assure you that the relevant authorities are looking into the matter.

(Note: While the points above refer to "investigations," they do not refer to a specific, ongoing criminal investigation. End note.)

¶4. (SBU) Post will be refraining from any comment except to provide the texts of statements made by the Department

spokesperson in Washington that:

- The U.S. takes very seriously any accusations of misconduct involving any U.S. personnel abroad.
- The individual in question has returned to Washington and the USG is looking into the matter.
- I refer you to the DOJ for any further inquiries on this issue.

¶15. (S/NF) Ambassador stressed to the three officials that he hoped this issue would not impede our mutual efforts to develop and improve our cooperation in many important areas. Guenaizia and Selmane both said they shared the same sentiment. Selmane said we would have to see how things developed; she did not know whether the alleged victims intended to lodge complaints in Algeria as well. Guenaizia said the Ambassador "did the right thing" by informing him, and Senhadji clearly registered approval when the Ambassador got to the point in the guidance where he mentioned that the relevant U.S. authorities were looking into the matter.

¶16. (S/NF) All American Mission personnel have been advised to keep a low profile and limit non-essential movements on January 29 and 30, the Algerian weekend. All personnel have also been instructed to report any formal or informal reactions, and the Embassy will test the phone tree this afternoon to account for all Mission personnel. We will continue to monitor local media coverage and reaction and evaluate our security posture accordingly, particularly around the Friday midday prayer time.

¶17. (S/NF) COMMENT: Our deployment of the guidance with

ALGIERS 00000106 002.17 OF 002

Guenaizia in particular was clearly appreciated and effective, and post is attempting to take the same approach with our contacts in the security services. The Algerian government is adept at differentiating between public and private discourse, so although a proactive response appears to have been effective thus far, it is too early to gauge what actions the government will feel compelled to take given an as yet unknown level of public and media anger over the story.

PEARCE